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"According to the letter received from the Kenosha soldier, the fighting had been bitter along a long line. Austrian and allied troops had been repeatedly caught in the charges over No Man's Land and finally the little American unit was called to take its place in the front line of the battle. With the order to 'charge' Hormac was one of the first men to go over. His bayonet was lifted to strike when the gleam of recognition passed over the face of the weathered Austrian soldier in front of him and Frank Hormac heard the call 'Stop, Brother!' It was a call of surrender, but a call of kinship and the Kenosha man at once recognized it.

"Hormac promptly took his brother and he was taken to the rear where the allied ranks had pitched their camp. He expressed a willingness to leave the Austrian army and gave the American unit valuable information as to the location of the Austrian divisions. Later the Americans and French, working on the information which had been given by the Austrian brother of the Kenosha soldier, made their way behind the Austrian's lines under his guidance and captured one large gun, fifty machine guns, and more than two hundred hand grenades.

"Frank and John Hormac are now united somewhere back of the Italian lines along the Piave. The brother, who wore an Austrian uniform until he met his brother from America in the charge, is now a noncombatant while Frank Hormac is still fighting with his American comrades. Sometime when the Huns have been driven back the two brothers are coming back to America."

## WISCONSIN HOME GUARDS DURING THE CIVIL WAR<sup>1</sup>

The movement that is spreading throughout Wisconsin to organize home guard units finds many precedents during the Civil War. When President Lincoln called upon the northern states for their organized militia in April, 1861, Wisconsin was asked to furnish only one regiment for immediate service. This came as a severe disappointment to our patriotic leaders, and Governor Randall at once sent a dispatch to the Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, urging him to accept additional units from this frontier state. He predicted

<sup>1</sup>Prepared for the State Council of Defense by John W. Oliver, of the editorial staff of the Wisconsin Historical Library.

a long struggle between the two sections, and insisted that a vigorous show of arms by the northern states would not only tend to weaken the forces of the Confederacy, but would likewise discourage any possible sentiment for the rebellion in this section of the country.

The feverish excitement that prevailed throughout Wisconsin saw thousands of men offering their services before the state or national government could accept them. On April 15, 1861, the same day on which Lincoln issued his proclamation, a monster mass meeting was held in the state capitol. Among the patriotic addresses given, Senator Brown, of Waupaca, sounded the keynote for the volunteers when he stated that the real question is not who shall *go*, but who will be compelled to *stay at home*. "If we sent 20,000 men to this war, he added, "and it should be as destructive to life as ordinary wars, we will not lose half as many men in battle as *would spoil at home for want of a fight*."

The state authorities were greatly embarrassed because of their inability to accept forthwith the thousands of men who offered their services. "We'll spoil for want of a fight" became a sort of a slogan for the disappointed patriots. Something had to be done. Suggestions began to pour into Governor Harvey's office and that of the adjutant general urging the citizens of every town in the state to organize home guards and practice military drilling. Legal sanction was given to the movement during the special session of the legislature in 1861. These organizations served a twofold purpose. Men were trained for active service in warfare, and, when their turn came to volunteer, were ready for action. Also, the presence of a military unit appearing in public once or twice a week tended to discourage those southern sympathizers who could be found in every state north of the Ohio.

The latter function was, of course, the primary one for the home guard organization. As the war progressed, the able-bodied volunteers of the state were sent to the front, and the danger of local disturbances became more threatening. Governor Harvey was quick to recognize this, and to check its development he promised the home guards whatever assistance the state had at its disposal. Local companies sprung up all over Wisconsin. The letters which their officers addressed to the adjutant general, now in possession of the

Wisconsin Historical Society, show that Governor Harvey had guessed right. The secession movement was squelched at the very outset of the war, and to the Home Guards belongs the credit.

### THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY TOKENS

The "Great Company" is what the Hudson Bay Company is called in Canada, and its history bears out this title, for of all the fur trade companies it has been the greatest in both length of time and extent of operation. Even today it is a powerful factor in the economic life of the far Northwest, and by its influence vast regions of barren land are policed and made to yield their harvest of splendid furs.

The fur trade has been in all times carried on almost wholly by barter. Dealing with a primitive people who had no notion of the complicated system of money exchange, calculations were based on merchandise exchange, in which the red man was very shrewd, estimating to a nicety the amount of blankets, guns, kettles, and beads his pack of furs should bring him. It was, nevertheless, necessary to have a standard of value, and from the earliest days of the American fur trade that standard was a beaver skin. Beaver was the most stable and constant in value of all peltries, and when it was used by the fashionable world to make hats, the supply never exceeded the demand. The beaver skin, as a standard of value, was called by the French Canadians a "plus" (pronounced "ploo") and this was the term in use in Wisconsin and those parts of the country where the French Canadian populace formed the majority of the fur trade operators. In the Hudson Bay Company, however, most of whose workers were of Scotch or Irish origin, the value of one beaver skin is spoken of as a "made beaver," while the Indians retain the primitive word "skin." In the course of time it has come to pass that a beaver is more valuable than a "made beaver" or a "skin," but these terms are still used as a standard from which negotiations are calculated. Some time about 1867 the Hudson Bay Company issued an edict that thereafter all transactions should be reckoned in pounds, shillings, and pence. This caused great confusion in the trade. Mr. Isaac Cowie, long employed by the Great Company, writes, "Whoever was the Hudson Bay official, who superseded the simple 'skin